

**May 28, 2010**

**Washington, DC** - Last night, U.S. Rep. Michael Arcuri (NY-24) helped defeat an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2011 (FY11) National Defense Authorization Act that would have cut funding for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter's F136 Competitive Engine (built by General Electric and Rolls Royce), which includes sensors and other engine components produced by Unison Industries in Norwich, NY. Cutting funding for the program would have wasted billions in taxpayer dollars and weakened national security, while putting nearly 300 jobs at Unison at risk.

"Completing the Joint Strike Fighter's F136 competitive engine is essential to our national security and will create competition that will save taxpayers billions of dollars," **said Arcuri**. "The nearly 300 employees at Unison in Norwich are integral to building the engine that will create that competition and security. Cutting funding for such an important defense project as it nears completion would be irresponsible to taxpayers, our soldiers fighting abroad and would needlessly risk hundreds of local jobs."

"The nearly 300 employees at the Unison Norwich facility are excited that the funding was preserved for the F136 competitive engine. We are all grateful for the strong support from Congressman Mike Arcuri who shares our views that competition on this program is the right thing for the tax payers, our people in uniform and the employees at Unison Norwich," **said Gary Cummings, Director of Norwich Operations for Unison**

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The F-35 Strike Fighter, capable of short takeoffs and vertical landings, will eventually replace 95 percent of the United States' entire fighter jet fleet in the Army, Navy and Marine Corps. Its engine must have cutting-edge technology to deliver the power and thrust necessary to meet these take-off and landing requirements. For the past 15 years, Congress has funded the development of the F136 competitive engine, at a total of over \$3 billion since 1996. If the program were to be canceled now, that previous investment would be lost.

Once finished, the F136 competitive engine will compete annually with another engine, built by another company, to determine which version of the engine is purchased for the F-35 jets that the Department of Defense purchases each year. History has shown with the other tactical fighter jet programs, particularly the F-16, that competition between engine designs limits cost

over-runs, significantly improves fleet readiness and limits the risk of grounding planes because of a defect, which could jeopardize national security. On the F-16 fighter, competition between engine designs yielded a savings of 21% over original cost estimates. The engine for the F-35 program is currently projected to cost \$100 billion over the next 40 years. Cost savings like the F-16's could therefore save taxpayers over \$20 billion on the F-35 engine.

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011, H.R. 5136, authorizes Congress to spend up to \$485 million to continue development of the F136 competitive engine. An amendment was offered during debate on the bill that would have stripped the funding for the F-35 competitive engine. Arcuri was one of a handful of members that led the opposition to the amendment in the House. Before the legislation was debated by the House, Arcuri also used his position on the House Rules Committee to demonstrate the advantages of continuing the program and block other amendments that would have combined the vote on the alternate engine with other popular measures.

The legislation considered today only authorizes funds for the F-35 competitive engine. Later this year, Congress will consider the annual defense spending bill, which will contain the actual appropriation of funding for Department of Defense programs, including the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. However, Congress can only appropriate funds up to the amount contained in the National Defense Authorization Act.

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